

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1649

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT,UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET LEADERSHIP: BREZHNEV MAKES FURTHER APPEARANCES,
OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

REF: MOSCOW 1546

1. BREZHNEV. AT SIX P.M. AND AGAIN AT NINE P.M. FEBRUARY
1, SOVIET TV NEWS CARRIED A BRIEF, FILMED ACCOUNT OF
BREZHNEV'S FEBRUARY 1 MEETING WITH RAUL CASTRO. THE
MEETING WAS IN BREZHNEV'S USUAL KREMLIN OFFICE AND
COMMENCED AROUND 12:30 P.M., JUDGING FROM A TASS PHOTO
OF THE EVENT, WHICH SHOWED A WALL CLOCK IN BREZHNEV'S
OFFICE. OF INTEREST IN THE FILM CLIP:

--BREZHNEV'S FACIAL FEATURES SEEMED NORMAL;
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--IN CONTRAST WITH THE JANUARY 31 FILM (REFTEL),
HE WAS SHOWN TO BE RELATIVELY ANIMATED ON THIS OCCASION;
THE FILM SEQUENCE BEGAN WITH BREZHNEV EHTUSIASTICALLY
EMBRACING HIS CUBAN GUEST; BREZHNEV WAS THEN SHOWN
WALKING, SOMEWHAT STIFFLY, WE THOUGHT, TO THE CONFERENCE
TABLE; BREZHNEV WAS LATER SHOWN LAUGHING, THEN REACHING

ACROSS THE TABLE FOR WHAT APPEARED TO BE A COPY OF THE MONTHLY JOURNAL "NOVY MIR" (POSSIBLY BREZHNEV HAD PRESENTED CASTRO WITH ISSUE NO. TWO FOR 1978, WHICH CONTAINS LEONID IL'ICH'S WARTIME MEMORIES);

--THE FILM APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY EDITED.

2. ACCORDING TO A TASS ITEM ON THE FEBRUARY 1 TV NIGHTLY NEWS AND PRINTED IN THE CENTRAL PRESS FEBRUARY 2, BREZHNEV, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND SEVERAL POLITBURO COLLEAGUES, ATTENDED THE OPERA THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 1. THE OSTENSIBLE OCCASION WAS THE BOL'SHOI'S 200TH PERFORMANCE OF VERDI'S "TROUBADOUR." THE IMPLICATION OF THIS, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH BREZHNEV'S JANUARY 31 AND FEBRUARY 1 KREMLIN MEETINGS, WOULD SEEM TO BE THAT THE GENERAL SECRETARY IS BACK ON A MORE OR LESS REGULAR SCHEDULE.

3. IN OTHER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

--AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, THE TASS ITEM ON THE OPERA LISTED FIRST AMONG THE ATTENDING LEADERS "GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CPSU CC, CHAIRMAN OF THE SS PRESIDUM L. I. BREZHNEV AND WIFE;" THE NEXT TO BE LISTED, OUT OF THE USUAL ALPHABETICAL ORDER, WAS "CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, MEMBER OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

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A. N. KOSYGIN;" NEXT CAME "CC CPSU POLITBURO MEMBERS" KIRILENKO, KULAKOV, PEL'SHE, SUSLOV, AND USTINOV;

--ONE PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS LISTING OF KOSYGIN AHEAD OF KIRILENKO WOULD BE THAT BECAUSE THE LEADERSHIP WAS HONORING THE BOL'SHOI THEATRE, WHICH OF COURSE FALLS UNDER THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS, KOSYGIN MERITED SPECIAL TREATMENT ON THIS PARTICULAR OCCASION AS HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT;

--ANDROPOV AND GROMYKO SEEM TO BE THE ONLY MOSCOW-BASED FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS NOT PRESENTLY IN ACTION OR OTHERWISE ACCOUNTED FOR; OUR RECORDS INDICATE THAT ANDROPOV HAS BEEN OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE SINCE LATE DECEMBER, AND THAT GROMYKO'S LAST PUBLICIZED APPEARANCE WAS ON JANUARY 14.
MATLOCK

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